

Institute of Biomedical Science
12 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL
Tel: 020 7713 0214 • Fax: 020 7837 9658
E-mail: mail@ibms.org
Website: www.ibms.org



Chief Executive
Jill Rodney

Royal College of Pathologists
2 Carlton House Terrace
London, SW1Y 5AF
Tel: 020 7451 6700
Mobile: 0757 834 9018

19 July 2013

Dear Sir,

Your article "Army of patients to be recruited to inspect NHS" (18 July) raises some important issues.

Professor Sir Mike Richards, the new Chief Inspector of Hospitals for England recognises the need for major changes to the inspection regime used by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We welcome his appointment and look forward to working with him.

Earlier this year The Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) and the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) assisted the CQC in the investigation of a NHS hospital's Pathology Department which was thought to have compromised the care of breast cancer patients. This investigation suggested to us three things about the CQC and the environment in which it operates.

First, the high level of regulatory skills and ethical integrity of the CQC's operational staff were clear. There was no evidence during our collaboration to justify recent accusations of a lack of openness.

Second, the CQC may not have enough staff for all the work expected of them and the complexities of specialist care were not matched by the CQC staffs' more generic regulatory skills.

Third, the NHS organisations concerned were unclear about key issues of performance and its necessary critical scrutiny. This lack of clarity initially impeded progress to a rational conclusion.

RCPATH and IBMS together provided the specialist skills needed to explain complex clinical, scientific and technical information underlying standards of care and levels of risks to patients. The reports of this investigation are published on the CQC website. CQC appreciated the value of this support and could not have concluded this investigation satisfactorily without this specialist input.

Our work with the CQC supports the view of the new Chief Inspector of Hospital that the governance of health care, including prospective and retrospective assessment of quality, can be improved if regulators work with the right mix of health professionals, patients and carers. Professional organisations in health care are there to define and support high standards of training and practice. They are also experienced in the investigation of practice when this is thought to have fallen below these standards. This experience is there for the benefit of all patients and available to all those statutory authorities charged with the regulation of health care.

Institute of Biomedical Science
12 Coldbath Square, London EC1R 5HL
Tel: 020 7713 0214 • Fax: 020 7837 9658
E-mail: mail@ibms.org
Website: www.ibms.org



Chief Executive
Jill Rodney

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A G Prentice'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

A G Prentice, President RCPATH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Bishop'. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

D Bishop President IBMS